954 (see page 48.) After her birth she is carried in the skin of a
863 gazelle (mhunti) which her mother ties round her neck and loins. When that skin has become too small, they get one of an antelope (mhala). She begins to walk ; when her mother sends her on an errand she is able to do it. She also begins to talk, and to know her father and mother. Then, when she has grown, they prepare for her a small pot of pounded and cooked mealies so that she may eat of it. After three years she is weaned and goes to stay for a time with her grandmother. After that she returns home.

857 "When she has learnt to walk, she is very fond of playing with
868 the shells of the sala. She cooks in them. Then, when she has done with them, she takes small pots and cooks little dinners. She also gets a small calabash, she goes to the lake to draw water and, on coming back, she gives it to her father so that he may wash his face. Here she is now gathering small bits of wood ; she makes small bundles of them and brings them home. Later on she will make heavier bundles.

"When she has grown up more, she will take charge of the work of her mother. She will do the work. But if the mother sees that she cannot do it all, she will help her. It may however be said that the mother needs no longer to crush her mealies,
583 neither to go to the well nor to the fireplace. When she is quite a grown up girl, the suitors come. If they are accepted, they bring the purchase money. They buy her (lobola) and do all they like. If she is prolific, she will bear many children. Now and then she returns to her parents' village, then she comes back to her husband. Her children grow. They go to get water, to cut her wood, to plough her fields. She goes with them. When they are
462 grown up, they get married. If amongst them there is a son, he goes to buy his wife. Thus she looks for a mother-in-law for her son. He will then be truly a man because he has got a mother-in-law! When her children are married, the mother again begins to do all her work. She steeps her mealies, crushes them to make flour, she cuts her wood, cooks her beer ; she prepares the light beer ; she smears the floor of her hut ; this is what she does till she is quite old.

888 "When she is quite old, they feed her. Her grandchildren are

1 [The following page is quoted from an essay by a native girl at the Swiss Mission school at Lourenço Marques -- Analyst]

783 village itself, which must carry out the collective purification of
768 *hlamba ndjaka*.

I must further mention a new custom which is spreading
587 amongst the Ba-Ronga in the neighbourhood of Lourenço
609 Marques. When a widow objects to becoming the wife of the legal
611 inheritor, she goes home and adopts another husband. There are plenty of men of other tribes, coming from Inhambane, Quelimane, Mozambique, who have no wife. They accept the proposal of the widow and go to live in her village. They are generally despised and called by the insulting name of *mugomo*, a Zulu word meaning an empty iron oil-tin. They are as hard and unfeeling as such a tin! If children are born, they belong to the family of the deceased husband, who paid the lobolo.

587 Sometimes also a widow chooses a nephew who is still a child. She gives him food as if she were his wife, but she lives with another man whom she loves. It even happens that she may choose a girl, the daughter of another wife of the deceased. (Annotatio 13.)[1]

C. OLD AGE AND DEATH

888 An old woman, having in some sort gone out from the sexual
782 community, enjoys some privileges which are taboo for her sisters who are still capable of childbearing. She is allowed to put on the clothing of the widows ; contamination of death is not so dangerous for her. She can proceed to the purification of the village, in certain cases of epidemic, and of the weapons of the warriors in war time (Part III). After the sacrifice of the black ram for rain, old women and small girls alone are allowed to eat the flesh of the victim.

462 But old and decrepit women are despised. As long as they
888 can still till their land, they are treated with consideration, but when they have lost all their strength and must be fed by their children, they are looked upon as troublesome burdens. I must say that, as long as she still has an atom of vigour, a Thonga woman goes to her field and tills it. During all her life time

1[See pp. 578-579 in these categories or in ML—Analyst]

462/888 she has contracted such an intimate union with Mother Earth that she cannot conceive existence away from her gardens, and she crawls to them with her hoe, by a kind of instinct, till she dies.

764 The death of the woman is accompanied by the same rites as the death of a man. I must mention, however, the custom of *mahloko*, which takes place when a woman dies while still in her prime. Mahloko comes from *nhloko*, head. The explanation of this technical word is this : the parents of the woman say : "Our head (viz. a person belonging to us) has died ; let us go to mourn her."

587 Let us first see how this mourning takes place *in the Ronga clans.*

578 If the two families were very friendly, the parents of the deceased will probably bring with them a little girl, saying : "This is our little green meat (mbuti), our little orange (rather sala, fruit of the nsala tree)." They offer her to the husband to take the place of the deceased wife, and a new contract will be made. The widower will then at once pay a first part of the lobolo, £ 5 for instance, and, in the course of time, he will marry his sister-in-law. But generally the visitors are angry, and the mahloko ceremony is very unpleasant. It may be that the deceased wife had not been entirely paid for. In that case her parents will come at the end of the mourning to "claim the herd" (ramela ntlhambi).

764/578/754 But though there may be no difficult lobola question in the way, uneasiness is felt, because the brothers of the deceased cannot help thinking that their sister has been killed by witchcraft. It was not yet time for her to die ; so she must have been bewitched by the husband's family, probably by her co-wives, who were jealous of her. When the Great Mourning took place, they hardly came to the mortuary village. One or two went to see their "head," and mourned her in their own kraal. To day, the day of mahloko, they assemble, and throw bones in order to know who will have to speak, who will receive the mahloko money, whether the money has been bewitched ? The whole company starts for the mortuary village, driving a goat before them. They sit down outside in the bush with dark looks ; there is no longer any hut to receive them... They have been noticed by the

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

595 515 784 821 621 342 492 831 462

of building will be stopped at once and the little community will find another place to which to move! Moreover the guilty woman will have to ask the principal wife for forgiveness. 2) A second great taboo is this : — No one must wash his body during the whole "buhlapfa", as this might cause the rain to fall and it would interfere with the building operations.

5. The building of the huts begins immediately, each man making the circular wall first. When all the walls are ready,

Carrying a roof.

the *roofs are carried* from the old village to the new by all the men together. They lift each roof on to their shoulders, after having removed the old grass, and go out of the village, not by the main entrance, but by one of the back gates which has been widened for the purpose. A broad road has been prepared through the bush. They follow it, marching as fast as they can, and singing the obscene songs which are reserved for special occasions (see Part VI). In these they insult the women who accompany them, carrying the baskets, the mortars, the pestles. "The village is broken in pieces, so are the ordinary laws. The insults which are taboo are now allowed" (Mboza). This suspension of morality in speech is only allowed on the day when roofs are carried to the new village. Some days later, again, the women will take their revenge when they smear the floor of the huts ; then they too will sing their songs, insulting the men. But

622 by the chief, and dies, his heirs must pay the compensation
596 claimed. All these rules clearly illustrate the communism of
672 family life and family property, under the supervision of the headman.

Should a numzane be absolutely unable to govern his village,
622 *the family council can depose him* and put another man in his
596 place. This council will be formed of old relatives, especially the paternal uncles to whom the younger brothers will go and complain of the misbehaviour of their headman. A younger brother will then be proclaimed and the elder will be despised. They will say : "Hi singe! A fahla muti, a hluli hi muti!" "He is a fool! He breaks the village ; he is overcome by the village," viz., not able to keep up his position.

As regards the *law of succession* to the headmanship, the second brother takes the place of the elder, and so on. The son of the elder cannot become headman until all his paternal uncles are dead. We shall find this principle also observed in the succession of the chiefs. (Part III.)

D. DAILY LIFE IN THE VILLAGE.

461 From the oxen kraal to the huts, from the square to the little wood, through the doors and in the reed yards, black forms are moving to and fro. Everybody seems busy. There is talking, laughing, playing and working. The expression "working like a nigger" is hardly applicable, for they do not kill themselves with work. It would, however, be quite as great a mistake to believe that the Natives spend all their time in loafing about. Far from it!

I. *Women's occupations.*

462 Women, especially, are very busy. When the sun rises, they
511 emerge from their huts, wash their faces, and light a little fire to warm the mealie pap which was left from the evening meal.

462
511
482

In a small pot they prepare a fresh sauce of monkey nuts to season it. The family takes its *morning meal* (fihlula) ; then, if it is the season of tillage, *they go to the fields*, with hoes on their shoulders, the shihundju (conic baskets) on their heads, and sometimes their babies on their backs. The whole morning they will dig up sweet potatoes, grub up their future plantation, or weed their

[252]

Phot. H. Gro.

Spelonken women preparing the evening meal after their return from the fields.

mealies. In the heat of the day they come back in order to prepare the evening meal. Sometimes, if the gardens are far away, or when they are employed in scaring the birds from their sorghum plantation, they remain the whole day in their fields, and cook their evening food there, bringing it back to the village at sunset quite hot (1).

(1) I saw a Rikatla woman coming home under such conditions, carrying her child on her shoulders and the burning monkey-nut sauce in the shihundju on her head. Her foot caught in a root ; she tottered ; the pot fell on the baby, which was scalded to death.

462 Many other home duties may oblige the woman to leave the
511 fields at noon; her head still laden with her basket, she may
356 go to the swamps, near by, and dig out a store of black clay
317 (bompfi). She comes back, mixes the clay with the fresh dung which she has taken from the oxen kraal, and, spreading this mixture with her hands, smears the floor of the hut. This work is called *sindja* (Ro) or *kopola* (Dj.). Dust and vermin will at once disappear under this plaster of black earth, which will dry in a few hours time. Woe to the woman who has not put enough dung in this novel kind of cement! The floor will crack. The clay will shrivel and, when people walk on it, it will crumble into dust! The work will have to be done all over again two or three days later. But if the clay is of good quality, it will harden and last at least a week, the more so as neither wooden shoes nor nailed boots will spoil it.

462 Another woman will go with her primitive axe in search of
511 dead wood. She makes a bundle which she ties with grasses,
213 strengthening these grasses by entwining them with small
284 twigs (1). On returning to the village, she throws her burden on to the ground, before the door of her hut, with the exclamation: "Hu!"

462 Others go to their storehouses, the small huts on poles, where
511 mealies, monkey nuts in their husks, millet and sorghum are kept.
343 They take what they need from these stores (tshaha) by lifting up
252 the roof of the little hut, come back and empty the mealies into the
516 mortar, whilst a friend rubs off the grains from the ears of millet or shells the monkey nuts. Two or three women seize their pestles and begin to pound, in measured time, the bottom of their mortars: Gu-gu-gu-gu. Quite a long way off, on the other side of the copse, this pestle song can be heard, resembling the noise of the flails when corn is threshed in the barn. And the busy women stream with perspiration! This method of crushing the mealies in an erect position, by a vigorous up and down movement of the pestle in

284 (1) Men, when they fasten a bundle with a string, make a knot (ba fundju) whilst
313 women twist it with a little stick (sulela hi linhi); when a woman ties a knot, the two ends of the string will be at right angles to the string, whilst when a man makes it, the ends will be parallel with it. (Mboza).

516 the mortar, is a very healthy one and gives the Thonga women a straight and slender figure. In the tribes where the millet is mostly ground between stones, the women who do this work kneeling are shorter and stouter.

462 511 312 Before putting the mealies on the fire, the women go down to the village well, their round pitchers on their heads, to fetch the water they need. In the Ronga country these wells are simple holes dug in the sand, in the centre of the hollows (1). Wells are generally surrounded by thorny branches so as to prevent the cattle from coming to drink and fouling the water. It must be observed that it is not a spring which feeds the well; it is the underground layer of water which has been reached, and which always maintains the same level except in times of drought.

[415]

Phot. A. de Meuron.

Shiluvane girls returning from the well.

462 511 372 252 The sun goes down on the horizon. The long shadows of the trees round the village lengthen on the square. Through the leaves, a few rays still reach the fireplaces and traverse the smoke which rises peacefully from the various kitchens. Between broken pots, or between the pieces of termitine clay which constitute the hearth on which the pots rest, the women place some pieces of dead wood; when these burn away in the centre, they push them further under the pot where the flour is cooking (ba hlanganyeta ndjilo). Evening has come. The men have arrived. With a large spoon (nkombe) the lady of the house

(1) In the Transvaal, where there are rivers, water is taken from them, or from wells dug near the spruit into which the water leaks through the soil, being more or less filtered by this process.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

places the food (phamela) on plates of the size of small basins or dishes (mbenga). We have seen how she distributes it amongst the inhabitants of the village. When all have finished eating, the women wash the plates, put aside the pots which contain the food left for the next morning, and tidy up the yards.

Whatever we may say, the day has been a well-filled one for the women. They are very rarely seen playing in the day time. We shall see how they recuperate themselves in the evening.

II. *Men's occupations.*

As for the men, their life is far from being as active as that of the women. They have not, like their diligent wives, the regular continuous work of preparing the food, not to mention the care of the children. The duties which fall on them, and which they are willing to perform, only require of them isolated efforts from time to time.

As regards *agricultural work*, it is generally believed that men leave this entirely to the women. This is exaggerated. Amongst the Rongas each man possesses his own field which he himself tills, and this is an old custom, a special term even being applied to the field thus tilled: it is called *mpashu*. He may sow seeds in it, but he does not weed it, leaving his wife to do this troublesome work for him and also to reap it. He makes only one exception in the case of the sorghum, of which he consents to go and cut the ears. But he helps his wife in other ways, for instance in the storing of the food; he builds the little huts used as storehouses, prepares the *tjala*, viz., the mat stretched on four poles on which ground nuts are dried in the field, digs holes for the *buhiri*, the shelf at the back of the hut where the basket containing the seeds is placed. His wife does not think him a lazy fellow at all. When the harvest is finished, she takes the smaller cobs of mealies (makunhula), those which will not be kept, or the grains of millet and sorghum which are found on the threshing floor after the threshing, and with them she prepares a special beer to

462 thank (tlangela) her husband for his kind help! This is her
273 method of notifying him that all the grain has been harvested, as, whatever the man's share of the work may have been, the mealies belong to him.

462 The main work of the man is the *building and repairing of the*
356 *huts*. This is truly an arduous job, but it is not of yearly recur-
342 rence. Every third or fourth year they are obliged to re-thatch the roof. The huts are built and repaired during the winter, from May to September.

A second domain, which is exclusively man's, is the *care of the cattle* ; the boys milk the cows, construct and repair the kraal : the little boys herd the goats, and the young men the oxen, as has already been mentioned.

462 It is also the men who *make all the utensils and tools* used in the
411 village, pots and other crockery excepted ; mortars, pestles,
294 handles for axes or hoes (mimphinyi), wooden platters, carved or forged articles, all this work pertains to them. They must also make the *ntehe* for their wives, or sisters, after the birth of the babies. This is probably the explanation of the curious fact noticed amongst Native Christians, namely that they are much more clever at needlework than their wives. Big fellows are often seen forsaking the hoe to work with the needle, and there are fathers who make their own clothing as well as the dresses for their wives and children!

462 *Hunting and fishing* are, of course, also men's work... or pastime.
224 For some of them hunting is an actual trade, at least such was the case in former times, before the White Governments imposed strict regulations and levied heavy licences on that sport. We shall study, in Part IV, the curious customs relating to these two favourite occupations of the Natives.

574 A great part of their time is devoted by the men to *paying*
517 *visits*. They are very fond of calling on each other, and sometimes
484 they go great distances to see relatives or friends. They do not travel to pay visits only, but they frequently journey to claim payment of their debts (milandju). To regain the possession of a miserable head of cattle they willingly lose whole weeks! And what endless discussions in the *hubo*, when an unfortunate visitor

825 777 484 782 that the road is not "clean" (Viguet). The flesh of this bird is used in the preparation of the charms carried by travellers. There are also two mammals which give the same warning : the duyker antelope (mhunti) and the polecat (mangobo). Should a boy going to Johannesburg meet with any of these three animals, he will go to his kokwana (grandfather) and ask him for help ; the old man will then take a mouthful of beer or water and project it towards the traveller (to make "phaa") with the following prayer addressed to the ancestor-gods : "You, so and so, look to this child who wants to travel! Bless him in his journey! May the Spirit of the bush (Shikwembo sha nhoba) remain asleep."

517 461 The *discussion of affairs* (ku khanela timhaka) on the square of the village also fills many an hour in a man's life.

On the whole, men have but little to do. We can fairly estimate at three months the time required for the work which they have to do for the village and for the community. The remaining months are devoted to pastimes and pleasure (1).

III. *Games of adults.*

000 Having already described boys' and girls' games (p. 66 and 172), I now proceed to those of the adults, as forming an important part of the Life of the Village.

462 (1) Much has been said and written about the division of village work between men and women in the Bantu kraal. I shall try to show in the Practical Conclusions, No. V that civilisation is bound to produce great changes in this region. But, as already pointed out, it is certain that to the Natives themselves their system appears perfectly natural and that the women do not at all complain of their fate. The following charming story which is told by a Moravian missionary, The Rev. Th. Bachmann, who lived for a long time amongst the Wa-Nika, between Lake Tanganyika and Nyassa gives fresh proof of this assertion :

000 One day, as the rain was pouring down, I saw Walusangano returning from his garden with his wife, Leya. The wife was walking in front with a big bundle of wood on her head. On the wood was a basket containing maize, cucumbers and beans, as well as the hoe. On her back Leya was carrying her youngest child. The other children followed and the father brought up the rear-guard, carrying only an open umbrella. We were greatly shocked at this sight, and I thought it my duty to intervene on behalf of the women. On Sunday night, at public worship, I spoke of what I had seen in the most expressive terms possible. But my speech did not make the impression I expected. The men looked very much embarrassed ; the women indignant.

The following week, at sunset, I was under my veranda, watching the lightning and

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

177 lobola money. But they learn to spend money on other things, and
461 those who are converts to Christianity become regular purchasers of
651 clothing, of better food, of books. The high taxation to which they are subjected also forces them to work. As long as this does not exceed a reasonable limit, and as long as the State causes the Native community to benefit by the high taxes levied on it, it is justifiable although this way of enforcing labour is not so normally healthy as the creation of
241 new wants (1). Another powerful influence which tends to make men
177 work more and to relieve women from the toil of tilling the fields, is
412 this. Wishing to make money by selling grain, the Natives are begin-
462 ning to clear larger fields than before, and we note with pleasure that they have adopted the use of the plough instead of the hoe in a great many quarters. The consequence of this change is that the men now do

416 (1) Another means has been used to obtain the same result, i. e. compulsory labour
v. (in Thonga *shibalu*). It is not at all my intention to treat this important but delicate
177. subject here. The League of Nations created in 1924 a special Slavery Commission
46 which has very ably and fully discussed the whole subject. These discussions have resulted in a Convention which was adopted by the Assembly of 1926; art. 5, which deals with forced labour, runs as follows:

The High Contracting Parties recognise that recourse to compulsory or forced labour may have grave consequences and undertake, each in respect of the territories placed under its sovereignty, jurisdiction, protection, suzerainty or tutelage, to take all necessary measures to prevent compulsory or forced labour from developing into conditions analogous to slavery.

It is agreed that:

(1) Subject to the transitional provisions laid down in paragraph (2) below, compulsory or forced labour may only be exacted for public purposes.

(2) In territories in which compulsory or forced labour for other than public purposes still survives, the High Contracting Parties shall endeavour progressively and as soon as possible to put an end to the practice. So long as such forced or compulsory labour exists, this labour shall invariably be of an exceptional character, shall always receive adequate remuneration, and shall not involve the removal of the labourers from their usual place of residence.

(3) In all cases, the responsibility for any recourse to compulsory or forced labour shall rest with the competent central authorities of the territory concerned.

The League of Nations has thus established the general principles, and nearly thirty States have already signed the Convention; amongst these we note with pleasure Great Britain and Portugal. Now the question has been transferred to the International Labour Office, which must deal with the application of the Convention. A special Committee of experts has been elected and it is hoped that it will fix general principles for Coloured Labour, which shall be submitted to the General Labour Conference in a not distant future.

I am glad to add that the Portuguese Government has recently issued a decree (N° 12.533) which has been published in the *Bolletim official de Moçambique*, November 1926, and which contains the following article (Art. 5, § unico): *Compulsory labour is only permitted when absolutely indispensable, for works of public interest and of undeniable urgency. This labour will be remunerated according to circumstances.*

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

241
462
179

the work of preparing the fields. As women have nothing to do with the cattle and as ploughing is done with oxen, men now perform this difficult labour, and so have to work hard. Is not this one splendid result of the spread of civilisation ? The fact cannot be denied that, as regards the mode of living and the distribution of work amongst men and women, a considerable change has already taken place and is being accentuated every day in the Thonga village. What will be the ultimate result of this ?

When discussing the Native problem, the most difficult of all South African problems, politicians, missionaries, civilised Natives and newspapers generally ask this question : "Is Native tribal life to be preserved or, on the contrary, destroyed ?" No clear, satisfactory, convincing reply has as yet been given. Tribal life is composed of two elements : communal life and national life, which ought to be considered separately. I deal here with the first of these elements only. The first remark I would venture to make is that it is somewhat presumptuous on our part to believe that we can exert any very great influence on the solution of this question. Whatever one may hope or fear, the evolution of the Bantu village, which began as soon as civilisation entered the land, will go on. It is not in the power of the Pope, of the Minister of Native Affairs, or of Superintendents of any large Missionary Societies, to prevent the transformation of the primitive patriarchal tribes, which is proceeding as a matter of necessity. Human society evolves continually, and the economic and social changes which have taken place in South Africa are so momentous that they will deeply affect and eventually completely transform the Bantu community. But (this is my second remark) what we can strive for is to control and guide this necessary evolution, and I should like to propose, to all those who can collaborate in the shaping of the future Bantu society, the two following suggestions :

000 1. Though the square house may supplant the round hut, though the hubo, the bandla and the absolute authority of the numzane may disappear, let us do our best to prevent the future Native village from being a servile imitation of our own European settlements. The more original the Natives remain, the more interesting and worthy to live they will be. The "place of jealousy" will disappear together with polygamy. But let us retain all that is pleasing and moral in the picturesque circle of huts : the respect for elders, the sense of family unity, the habit of mutual help, the readiness to share food with others. Cannot these virtues be retained in the Christian village, under the

C. AGRICULTURAL CUSTOMS.

I. *The Agricultural Year.*

137 221 At the season which is called *shimumu*, the little heat, that is to say in July, when the warm weather begins, the nkuhlu puts forth new shoots. Though rain is still far off, the mahogany and sala trees become covered with leaves of a wonderfully delicate green. A kind of Composita (the Helychrisum parviflorum, shirimbyati), which is wide-spread on the sandy dunes, blossoms all over the country ; a beautiful lily (Crinum Forbesii) will expand its splendid white and pink flowers : the *winter* (bushika) has passed away : soon the *hlobo* (summer) will come.

412 221 462 When the Ronga woman notices these signs, she picks up her hoe (shikomo) and starts for the hills, or for the marshes. Her husband has already repaired the implement for her, at home. If the handle was worn out, he has cut a branch of nkonono, (Terminalia sericea), which is the wood invariably used for the purpose, and has shaped it so that one end is thicker than the other ; in this thick end a hole is bored, while the iron hoe head is heated in the fire : the head has, at its base, a long iron point which is inserted nearly red-hot into the hole, burning its way in, and thus solidly fixing the two parts together. This method of fixing on the handle is called ku lumela shikomo. The Ronga hoe has a very short handle, sometimes not more than two feet in length. The Transvaal Thongas use handles three to four feet long. The woman has now nothing to do but to work hard, her lord and master having duly accomplished his share of the labour.

241 221 It is the end of August. Two or three months must still elapse before the rainy season sets in. This period of the year is devoted to a two-fold work : the clearing of fresh land and the cultivation of marshes.

The *clearing of fresh land*, ku tlhaba lisindje (Ro.), ku khatsha

231 562 841 784 men having relations with women during menstruation (I. p. 187). Should a drop of it fall in the cattle kraal, this would endanger the health of the whole herd. Women are even prohibited from passing through a herd of oxen ; they must go round it, because otherwise the death of the calves would ensue. Amongst the Ba-Ngoni this taboo is so strong that a woman guilty of having transgressed against it was put to death (1).

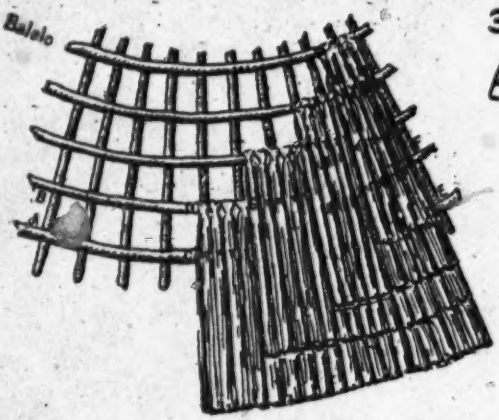
231 262 556 The object of oxen-breeding is not milk but the acquisition of *wealth* ; oxen mean wealth to the Native, a means of purchasing girls and of thus increasing his family. Oxen are also bred for food, the meat being highly appreciated and divided amongst all the members of the family according to the strict rules previously explained (I. p. 329). The slaughtering is done by piercing the heart with an assagai, a painful and sometimes very protracted operation. This occurs at marriage feasts, at other family and national gatherings, at the sacrifice for rain (Part VI), and on special occasions, once a year for instance, when a headman wishes to feast his people. All, even neighbours who are not relatives and travellers, are welcome to the feast. Natives have wonderful olfactory powers. They seem to smell out the *lisuna*, viz., the peculiar odour of the meat, a mile off, and when an ox has been killed you see them emerging from the bush on all sides!

234 As regards *milk*, it certainly plays a part in the food of villages which are fortunate enough to possess a well-filled oxen kraal. The *milking* of the cows presents difficulties unknown in Europe! African cows have not yet learned to submit tamely to this operation! The calf must always be allowed to suck a few mouthfuls, then a boy pulls it away from the teat and the cow consents to be milked. Should a cow be too wild, they pass a string through its

241 462 (1) We meet here with an interesting instance of a superstition having no scientific basis whatever, which is nevertheless productive of good results. Women must keep apart from oxen. Since the plough was introduced amongst South African Natives, they have been quick to notice that it is a very useful instrument, and have adopted it in many places. The plough has to be drawn by oxen and men alone are allowed to drive them. Thus women are relieved of the heavy work of tilling the fields which had been allotted to them by immemorial custom. It is probable that further knowledge will free the Natives from their old fear and from the taboo which resulted from it ; yet the idea that everything connected with oxen belongs to the domain of man will remain and thus real social progress will have been obtained through an absurd superstition !

double object in view in thus crowning the huts : first to keep the rain from percolating through at the top, and secondly to impart to the building, by means of this highly ornamental addition, a degree of finish, an air of beauty, ease and opulence which it certainly would never have possessed had it terminated in an ordinary point. It is, no doubt, owing to the fact that the crown is the glory of the house that it is removed as soon as the occupant dies!

There are still two more operations to be performed before the hut is finished : *the plastering* (bama (Ro.), phama (Dj.) and the making of the *door*. But these two jobs can be undertaken at the same time for the very good reason that plastering is the work of the wives, while making the door is that of the husband. Accompanied by other women of the village, the future mistress of the hut starts out for the marshes to collect some black clay (bompfi). If the marshes are too far off, she will content herself with digging in one of the ants'nests on the hillside. These terrible ants, which destroy everything, collect large quantities of hard earth, with which to build their nests, and this differs largely from the sand of the surroundings. (It may perhaps be simply sand hardened and changed by the acid secretions of the termites.) The shirundju, the conical basket which women carry on their heads, will be used to take home clods of red or black clay, and, using the same baskets, they will fetch from the cattle kraal some fresh dung which they mix with the clay, inside the new hut, pouring water on the mixture to reduce it to the proper consistency. They tread the unsavoury mud with their feet, and, with this semi-liquid mortar, plaster the wall on the inside,



Construction of the Thonga roof.